

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-17 without prejudice or disclaimer, and substitute new claims 18-34 therefor as follows:

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

18. (New) A method for planning a radiocommunications network, comprising: computing cell coverage, to indicate a region around a radio base station where a radioelectric signal radiating out from the radio base station copes with given requirements;

wherein computing cell coverage comprises:

dividing a region around said radio base station into a number of first areas; dividing at least some of said first areas into a number of second areas; and for at least some target second areas of said second areas, computing respective quantities indicative of the coverage within said target second areas, each quantity being computed for the respective target second area as a function of data describing the environment between said radio base station and said target second area along a propagation path of a radioelectric signal radiating out from said radio base station and passing through said target second area;

each quantity being computed for the respective target second area as a function of data describing the environment within at least some second areas close to at least one of said radio base station and said target second area along the radioelectric signal

propagation path, and as a function of data describing the environment within at least some first areas along the remaining stretch of the radioelectric signal propagation path.

19. (New) The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein computing a second quantity for a target second area comprises:

    checking availability of data describing the environment within at least some second areas close to said radio base station and said target second area;  
    forming a mixed resolution environment profile describing the environment between said radio base station and said target second area along said radioelectric signal propagation path, said mixed resolution environment profile describing the environment within at least some second areas close to at least one of said radio base station and said target second area depending on environment descriptive data availability, and within at least some first areas along the remaining stretch of the radioelectric signal propagation path; and

    computing said quantity on the basis of said mixed resolution environment profile.

20. (New) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein forming a mixed resolution environment profile comprises:

    identifying obstacles encountered by said radioelectric signal within at least some first areas along the propagation path from said radio base station to said target second area; and

    forming the part of the mixed resolution environment profile describing the environment within at least some first areas along the remaining stretch of the

radioelectric signal propagation path so that said part describes the obstacles identified within said first areas.

21. (New) The method as claimed in claim 20, wherein forming the part of the mixed resolution environment profile describing the environment within at least some first areas along the remaining stretch of the radioelectric signal propagation path so that said part describes the obstacles identified within said first areas comprises:

consolidating identified obstacles which are spaced apart one from another at a distance lower than a given distance; and

forming the part of the mixed resolution environment profile describing the environment within at least some first areas along the remaining stretch of the radioelectric signal propagation path so that said part describes said consolidated obstacles.

22. (New) The method as claimed in claim 20, wherein obstacles encountered by said radioelectric signal within at least some first areas along the propagation path from said radio base station to said second area are identified according to a stretched string technique.

23. (New) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein forming a mixed environment profile comprises:

forming a first end and a second end of said mixed resolution environment profile describing the environment within at least some second areas close to said radio base station and said target second area depending on environment descriptive data availability.

24. (New) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein computing said quantity on the basis of said mixed environment profile comprises:

identifying obstacles encountered by said radioelectric signal along the propagation path from said radio base station to said target second area on the basis of said mixed resolution environment profile; and

computing said quantity on the basis of said identified obstacles.

25. (New) The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said obstacles are identified according to a stretched string technique.

26. (New) The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein computing said quantity on the basis of said identified obstacles comprises:

computing attenuation by diffraction on said identified obstacles of a radioelectric signal radiating out from said radio base station along the propagation path to said second area,

wherein computing attenuation by diffraction comprises:

computing a first contribution due to orographic obstacles;

computing a second contribution due to buildings;

computing a third contribution due to vegetation; and

computing said attenuation by diffraction as a weighted sum of said first, second and third contributions.

27. (New) The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the environment within second areas close to said radio base station and said target second area along the radioelectric signal propagation path is described by using a first resolution and the environment within first areas along the remaining stretch of the radioelectric signal

propagation path is described by using a second resolution lower than said first resolution.

28. (New) The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said data describing the environment within said second areas close to said radio base station and said second area along the radioelectric signal propagation path include average ground altimetry, information as to the presence of a building, vegetation or nothing, and height of the building or vegetation.

29. (New) The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said data describing the environment within said first areas along said at least part of the remaining stretch of the radioelectric signal propagation comprises average ground altimetry.

30. (New) The method as claimed in claim 29, wherein a quantity for a respective second area occupied by a building is computed as a function of quantities computed for second areas surrounding the second area occupied by the building.

31. (New) The method as claimed in claim 30, wherein a quantity for a respective second area occupied by a building is computed as a weighted average of quantities computed for second areas surrounding the second area occupied by the building.

32. (New) The method as claimed in claim 31, wherein said quantities computed for second areas surrounding the second area occupied by the building are weighted by using respective weights which are inversely proportional to the squared distance between the second area occupied by the building and the second areas surrounding the second area occupied by the building.

33. (New) A processing system capable of being programmed to implement the method according to claim 18.

34. (New) Computer program modules comprising computer program code means, said computer program modules being able, when loaded in a processing system, to implement the method according to claim 18.